UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

Prentice Computer Centre

NEWSLETTER

authorization: Director of the Centre

1 CONTENTS OF THIS ISSUE

2 FAREWELL TO GE-225 COMPUTER

A small ceremony was held on the afternoon of the 16th February to farewell the GE-225 Computer. Mr. J.E. Ritchie, Deputy Vice Chancellor (Finance & Fabric) and Chairman of the Prentice Computer Centre Management Committee welcomed the guests. Emeritus Professor S.A. Prentice ran the last program through the machine and powered it down for the last time. The Vice Chancellor, Sir Zelman Cowen, then presented the GE-225 to Dr. A. Bartholomai representing the Board of the Queensland Museum.

It was very pleasing that Professor John Bennett, Basser Department of Computer Science University of Sydney, who assisted the University in the initial acquisition was able to be present at the ceremony. Other guests included representatives of organizations which made financial contributions to enable the purchase of the GE-225, members of the original University Committee and some of the original members of staff. Ann Wass (Macarthur) the Centre's first operator was there and, of course, Dick Kelly who did so much to establish and develop the installation.

We are very sorry it was not possible to invite all the many users who had long association with the GE-225. You will appreciate we had a problem accommodating guests in the space available within the computer room.

It may be some consolation that in some future time, you may be able to take your grandchildren (with mini-computers in their belt pouches) to the Queensland Museum and explain what it was like in the old days.

3   WELCOME NEW HAWKEN BUILDING SERVICE AREA

In order to provide space for expansion of computing equipment in the basement computer room, a new service area has been built behind the Client Room on the ground floor of the Hawken Building. It will provide the following services:

    (i)   Receipt and dispatch of work

    (ii)   Accounting enquiries, sale of manuals, etc.

    (iii)   Client consulting

    (iv)   Public Graphics area.

The area will be open from 8 a.m. to midnight Monday to Friday.

There should be no reason for users to visit the basement area except to see members of Prentice Computer Centre staff.   Appointments should be made with the receptionist at the basement foyer (extension 6018).   The area will be locked outside of normal office hours.

The Public Graphics area will initially have available a Tektronix Static Graphic 4014 terminal.   This will be available from Tuesday, 1 March.   In the near future, a GT42 dynamic graphics system will be operational and later a digitiser.   At this stage, the use of the graphic facilities is limited to members of University staff and post-graduate students where written authorization has been given by an academic supervisor.   The use of the graphic terminal must be booked in advance.   Bookings can be made with Carol Walker on extension 188.

There will doubtless be some initial problems with the running of the new service area and I hope our users will be patient with us.   Please let the Director (Alan Coulter) know of any major problems.

4   LOWER COST AND IMPROVED TURNAROUND FOR STUDENT MIDITRAN

The Centre is concerned to lower the cost and improve the response on student jobs.   As a start, a new processing system will be introduced for mark sense student Fortran jobs.   This new system runs on the PDP11/10 mini-computers.   It was developed by Monash University and is called MONECS (Monash University Educational Computing System).

Initially, it will be necessary to run MONECS at existing remote batch stations in theHawken Building, Commerce Building and at Griffith University. Later we plan to install a separate PDP11/10 in the client room in the Hawken Building and students will load their input cards and tear off their output from the printer.

A further development to provide lower cost computing will be the upgrade, around mid semester, of the PDP11/10 computers in Commerce and Griffith University to PDP11/34 computers. This will allow further services to be provided at the remote stations.

The MONECS service will be provided from the start of first semester. A new optical mark card is required for the new system. It can be distinguished from the old MIDITRAN card by the clock marks below the function area. There are also some changes in the function area, in that the open parenthesis for some statement types is now included. (DO NOT TRY TO USE THE OLD CARDS WITH MONECS).

Supplies of cards are now available from the Centre in boxes of 2000 at a price of $15.00/box, i.e. the same price as the old MIDITRAN cards (students should obtain cards from their academic supervisors). As a trial, there will be no charge for processing but the cooperation of all users will be required to keep overhead costs down. The charge rate will be reviewed by the Prentice Computer Centre Management Committee in the light of experience.

For MONECS, there are no additional control cards required before or after the deck of student cards as was the case with MIDITRAN. The deck setup requires only mark sense cards. Each job is headed by a *JOB card and end by a *ENDJOB card. If there is data to be read by the program, it must be preceded by the *DATA card. Only the *JOB card has additional fields and its format is:

> *JOB,*number*,FTN,*name*
>
> - *number* is a student number allocated by the supervisor and must be between 1000 and 9999. This number is used for reporting purposes only.
>
> - FTN signifies that the Fortran system is being used.
>
> - *name*, the student name, is optional and treated as a comment.

At the Griffith and Commerce Precinct stations, card decks should be handed to the operator on duty and output will be available for collection when processing is complete. At the Hawken Precinct station, card trays will be available at the ground floor Client Room for receipt of card decks. These will be processed periodically

3

during nominated times and output and card decks will be returned to the Client Room.   Turnaround should be about 10 to 15 minutes.

The times that MONECS will be running at the various stations will be as follows:

Hawken Precinct Station	0800 hrs to 0930 hrs
	1200 hrs to 1300 hrs
	1600 hrs to 1800 hrs
	Overnight
Commerce Precinct Station	1100 hrs to 1300 hrs
	1500 hrs to 1700 hrs
Griffith Station	1030 hrs to 1300 hrs
	1430 hrs to 1700 hrs

Old MIDITRAN cards will be processed only at the central site on the PDP-10 at normal charge rates and only on an overnight basis. Miditran card decks shuld be clearly identified as such.   This service will be continued to the end of first semester to assist users who have stocks of the old MIDITRAN cards.

5   CHARGE RATES

Despite increased costs associated with salaries, power and consumables, the Management Committee has decided not to increase PDP-10 charges in 1977.   One area of necessary adjustment, however, relates to overhead costs associated with small accounts for external clients. As from 1.3.77, the minimum charge for external clients will be increased to $20 per monthly invoice (please note this is a minimum charge and not additional to normal computing charges). We recognize, of course, the special neeås of High Schools and we feel that the availability of the MONECS system described previously will offset substantially this increase and provide them with an improved service.

6   NEW SOFTWARE

The following software, released by DEA, will be made available on NEW: on Monday, 14 March 1977:

ALGOL 7 (717)	Primarily a maintenance release, with significant work in the string handling area and additional diagnostic facilities.
COMPIL 22C (307)	Primarily a maintenance release

         LINK 3A (560)   Primarily a maintenance release

        MACRO 50A (432)   Primarily a maintenance release.

7   ALGOL 6A (636)

The error reported with this version of Algol relating to assignment
of real constants to integer variables has been corrected in the
version presently on NEW: and this version will be transferred to
STD: on Monday, 14 March 1977.

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